

Chicago Dancemakers Forum

CDF was initiated in 2003 by a consortium of three organizations: Museum of Contemporary Art, The Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago, and Links Hall. Today, CDF is led by representatives of those organizations, two independent dance artists, and a part-time project director, all of whom are stakeholders in the contemporary dance community.

Lab Artist Program

The CDF Lab Artists Program awards grants and professional support to select artists for research and development of new directions in their work.

- CDF awards are distinctive in that they emphasize **artistic growth** through the **creative process**.
- Geared toward a **focused scale and high quality**, the Lab Artist Program gives four individuals each year **\$15,000 grants** for research, development, and presentation of a new project.
- Grant funds are bolstered with a **year-long program of mentorship and feedback** from the CDF consortium and peer artists. Roundtable meetings and progress showings **foster exchange** about artistic, critical, and resource issues. These meetings also nurture new artistic and peer relationships among Lab Artists and consortium members.
- Three intrinsic qualities of CDF – **confidence, validation and the permission to fail** – permit artistic transformation and deeper exploration. In an evaluation study, former Lab Artists said that CDF helped take them to **a new artistic level**. They clarified that CDF motivated and encouraged them to **focus on their personal visions**; and **to experiment in integrating new artistic elements into their dance**.

To date, CDF has awarded **\$420,000 in grants**. This is **the single largest source of funding and support for new dance development in Chicago**. Lab Artists represent a broad array of artistic interests, cultural backgrounds, and ages:

2010 Lab Artists – Rachel Bunting, Rachel Damon, Meida Teresa McNeal, Erica Mott;
2009 Lab Artists – Julia Antonick, Lin Hixson, Kevin Iega Jeff, Atalee Judy;
2008 Lab Artists – Jan Bartoszek, Peter Carpenter, Jonathan Mayer, Nadia Oussenko;
2007 Lab Artists – Matthew Hollis, Ayako Kato, Nicole LeGette, Julia Mayer;
2006 Lab Artists – Darrell Jones, Margaret Morris, Molly Shanahan, Michelle Kranicke;
2005 Lab Artists – Carrie Hanson, Margi Cole, Asimina Chremos, Julia Rhoads;
2004 Lab Artists – Lane Alexander, Shirley Mordine, Hema Rajagopalan, Eduardo Vilaro;
2003 Lab Artists – Ginger Farley, Jimmy Payne, Jr., Sheldon Smith, Erica Wilson-Perkins;

Over **150** dancer/performers and **60** collaborators, including videographers, costume and lighting designers, and musicians, have been involved with the various CDF projects.

Workshops and Discussions

In addition, CDF facilitates dynamic interactions among a broader dance community with professional workshops, public showings, and critical forums and discussions. These activities are designed to create critical space for individual learning and for sharing process-oriented discoveries. CDF aims to foster critical engagement and to advance artistic development for dancemakers and their collaborators working in fields such as dramaturgy, music and video.

35 different workshop and discussion events with over **850** participants have taken place in the past four years. For example, since 2007, CDF, in partnership with Silverspace Studio and the Chicago Seminar on Dance and Performance, has hosted a monthly series of salons. The *Salons* achieve twin purposes. First, the presentations provide the Chicago dance-engaged community with ways to see “behind the curtain” of different artists. At each salon, a different artist offers perspective on their creative practice and ideas through discussion, video documentation, and/or demonstrations. Recent guest speakers and artists have included Ann Carlson, Raimund Hoghe, David Dorfman, Tere O’Connor, Carrie Hanson, Diego Pinon and Asimina Chremos.